



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER HIGH SCHOOL COACH SENTENCED FOR USING THE INTERNET TO PROPOSITION TEEN FOR SEX

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Caldwell County man has been sentenced for using the Internet to solicit sex from a person whom he believed was a 16-year-old boy.

Harry Allen “Hank” Claypole, 55, of Polo, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs on Wednesday, November 20, 2002, to one year and three months in prison without parole.

On February 27, 2002, **Claypole** pleaded guilty to a federal indictment charging him with one count of use of interstate communications facilities to entice a minor to engage in illegal sexual activity.

Claypole was arrested by FBI agents on October 24, 2001, outside the Kum and Go convenience store in Cameron, Graves said, after he approached a cooperating witness who was posing as the 16-year-old boy. Another cooperating witness had contacted the FBI in late August to report an ad that had been found on the Yahoo! Personals Web page, Graves explained, in which an individual with the e-mail address of “Hank69boys” had described himself as a 53-year-old gay white male coach from Polo, Missouri, who was “seeking trim smooth boys under 21.”

The cooperating witness, who is an adult, initiated an e-mail contact with “Hank69boys,” and subsequently had multiple e-mail correspondence to and from that address from August 31 through October 16, 2001. Through the process, Graves said, “Hank69boys” was identified as **Claypole**, who used public access computers at the Ray County Public Library and Johnson County Community College.

In early October, 2001, **Claypole** sent a prepaid telephone calling card through the U.S. mail to the adult cooperating witness to enable the witness to place calls, Graves said. On October 18 and 22, 2001, with the FBI monitoring the conversations, the younger cooperating witness, posing as “Robbie,” placed calls to **Claypole** in which the two arranged to meet at the Cameron convenience store.

Claypole, a former assistant high school athletic coach, has been employed with the Rich Hill School District in Rich Hill, Mo., the Wapsie Valley School District in Fairbanks, Iowa, and the Comanche County School District in Coldwater, Kansas.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Katharine Fincham. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation the United States Customs Office, the Missouri Highway Patrol and the Cameron, Missouri, Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow